Theo. Seminary. Columbia S.C. Nov 25th 1840

Dear Brethren

Your letter dated August 21st arrived during our Summer Vacation, and was not read before our Society until our regular Meeting in Nov. - consequently our reply to it has been unintentionally delayed thus long. As you proposed to us certain questions touching our religious interests we proceed at once, without any preliminary remarks, to their consideration.

1. "What is the State of Religion in your region of country." The State of piety in this State and we believe in the Southern States generally, is now and has been for some time past, unusually low. A few years since, many of our Churches were blessed with refreshings from the presence of the Lord - Saints were quickened into life energy and made to "rejoice in the God of their Salvation." While Sinners in crowds cried out in the bitter agony of their Souls "What shall we do to be saved." Those, Brethren, were pleasant times - They are truly green spots in the history of our Churches - But there has been a melancholy reaction. The Churches seem to have settled down into a lethargy almost hopeless - they seem bound hand & foot by the chains of a deathlike Slumber, and nothing can arouse them but the mighty power of God. We are not only destitute of those precious & powerful Revivals in our midst, but our Church does not appear to make even a slow & gradual progress in Numbers. Many of the Presbyterian Churches in S.C. are decreasing in numbers & in Spirituality - Some are standing still, and but a few can be said to realize to their full extent the solemn Obligations resting upon them, and to manifest to the world, that activity, that zeal, and that efficiency which should characterize every community which professes to be actuated by the principles of the Gospel of Christ.

2. "What interest is manifested in the Work of Conversion." We say emphatically very little. All the contributions made in the Synod of S.C. & Ga. for the support of our Missionary Boards, are made by a few Churches. As proof of this, we may state that it was ascertained at the late meeting of our Synod that not more than 25 Churches out of about 170 took up collections for this Object during the past year. It is evident then, that the great body of our Churches Members were unmindful the Cause of Missions in their Donations. Perhaps we may say both truth & propriety, that they pray as little as they give

if they do not feel interest enough in our Missionary Operations, to give of their substance in order to send out the light of the Gospel, how can we expect them to pray with faith for the advancement of this glorious Cause? How can they pray "Thy Kingdom come" and, yet at the same time fold their arms & make not a single effort to bring about that Kingdom? How can they, with the Sweet Psalmist of Israel say "Send out thy light and thy truth" & yet fail to use those means, through which, according to the appointment of God, His light & truth may be scattered? How can they pray for an increase of Laborers & yet refuse to cultivate a Missionary Spirit in their Children - refuse to aid in preparing, sending forth and supporting Heralds of the Cross? The truth is our Churches & Ministers do not feel the awful Obligations resting upon them to convey the blessings of Salvation to the perishing Heathen, and all of them need more of the Spirit of that Benevolence, which encircles within its arms the whole family of Adam, and more of the Spirit of that Christian Liberality which exhibits duly in relieving the temporal and Spiritual wants of our fellow men.

3. "What call is there for Laborers in your midst?" In some parts of this State, the people are well supplied with the ministrations of the Word, but in other parts the destitution is great. While many of our vacant Churches are very small and very poor, others there are which, tho' they imagine that they are so poor in this World's goods that they can not support Pastors, are in reality not in want of funds, but in want of a right Spirit. The former can not possibly enjoy the Ministry, unless aid is made upon our Domestic Missionary funds. In addition to these vacancies, there are some tracts of country in this State which are wholly destitute of Ministers of our Branch of the Christian Church & whose inhabitants would very readily listen to the Gospel were it sent to them, but would not be willing to support those who preached. This is purely Missionary ground, where the people can only be reached through Evangelists and were they thus reached, the probability is that much good might be effected in building up and organizing Churches. But the difficulty is that we have neither the men nor the money. From this statement imperfect as it necessarily must be it is evident that there are great destitutions in Ohio. The great question with us is shall we attempt to employ Missionaries among them at the expense of our people & which must shortly be decisively answered. Shall we make an effort to relinquish these feeble & destitute Churches or shall we make an effort to employ Missionaries among them at the expense of the Church? It is a question which demands the solemn consideration of our people & which must shortly be decisively answered.

4. "What opening is there for the religious instruction of the colored population?"
We can confidently say to you that there is a growing desire among us to see that our servants are faithfully instructed in the great truths of Christianity. Our Ministers generally do esteem the colored population around them "as a part & parcel of their charge" and as such many of them are successfully engaged every week in imparting to them the truths of God. The consequence is that there is a more general attendance upon the ordinances of God's House and a more close and profitable hearing of the Word of Truth. That the Blacks have been too long neglected by the Churches & their Ministers we readily grant, but we are bound, in candor, to say that the imprudent zeal & mistaken judgement and false Benevolence of some in the Northern States, who call themselves the friends of the Slave, have done more to prejudice the public mind at the South against imparting instruction to the Blacks - more to retard the efforts of Southern Christians in this behalf and thus to keep them in ignorance, than all other causes combined. The religious privileges and civil rights of our colored population lie in the hands of their Masters "according to the flesh" and they are both secured, provided no mad attempts, & unwarrantable interference from abroad, do not excite the prejudices, alarm the fears and cut short the efforts of Southern Christians. We remember well that a few years since, all the plans & arrangements of Southern Masters for the benefit of their servants were relinquished in consequence of the fanatical meddling of certain Pseudo-Philanthropists. A mighty prejudice was excited - the fears of our people were alarmed and every Minister Elder and Planter, instantaneously left off the plans they had devised for the better religious instruction of those in our midst. Time, under our Authority, has healed the wounds then inflicted, quelled the fears then excited and removed in part at least the prejudice then produced. The public mind is again anxiously turned to this deeply interesting subject and the question is beginning to be agitated in the private circle, in the Church Session and in the Ecclesiastical Judicatory What can and ought to be done to ameliorate the moral condition of our Servants? An extensive correspondence (now being published in the Charleston Observer) has recently been conducted by Ministers & distinguished Laymen throughout the South upon Subjects connected with this part of our population - a call has been made for the publication of a Series of Tracts unfolding the Obligations as well as explaining the duties of Masters & pointing out the best means of elevating the condition of the Blacks & bringing them under the influence of the Gospel. Churches have in places been built for their special use - & Sabbath Schools on the plan of oral instruction established. Some few Ministers are devoting their whole time to them while others devote a part. Such Brethren, are the pleading signs among us of a growing interest in the Spiritual welfare of this class of population, and we feel assured from present prospects that these efforts will be enlarged & an abundant & glorious harvest be reaped

unites our plans are again frustrated by the improper interference of persons who have a "zeal which is not according to knowledge" and who by their wild crusade against the rights of the Whites and the interests of the Blacks are rivetting that very system which they affect to despise, & endeavour to overthrow. We speak Brethren plainly & in Christian Candor. Our words are the words of "truth and soberness". We know whereof we affirm. We feel that the interests of a large part of our population and the interests of the Church are concerned in this matter & therefore it is that we thus freely & earnestly express the sentiments of our hearts.

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The Society of Missionary Inquiry
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3. "What is the State of your Seminary?" Upon this point, we only have room to say that our number at present is very small only 14. but we rejoice that we are able to say that we dwell together in Unity and peace. When we attentively view our prospects as they now appear, we are somewhat discouraged, but while we do not despair. We feel that we should not too bitterly lament "the day of small things" but should have faith to believe that the Lord has and that planted this "Institution, will in due time accomplish the purpose for which He designed it.

Peace be to the Brethren and love with faith from God the Father & the Lord Jesus Christ".

In behalf of the Society of Inquiry John D. Wilson Cor. Sec.